

Human values and welfare state support in Europe: An East-West divide?

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Abstract

This study uses comparative data from the European Social Survey to investigate the influence of self-transcendence and conservation values on public support for the welfare state. The results firstly show that these value dimensions are strongly related to welfare state support in the majority of the countries investigated. The main contribution of this study however, is that it evidences striking differences between countries regarding which values drive welfare attitudes, and the strength of the association between values and attitudes. Moreover, we show that the between-country variation in value effects is systematically related to contextual factors. Self-transcendence values are found to be a strong predictor of welfare state support in countries with high levels of social expenditure. In the less generous welfare states of Eastern Europe, the effects of self-transcendence values are weaker or absent. In Eastern European countries, conservation rather than self-transcendence values drive attitudes to the welfare state. Outspoken cohort differences in value effects in Eastern European countries as well as persisting differences between East and West Germany confirm our interpretation that the particular Eastern European pattern can be ascribed to the unique experiences of ‘authoritarian egalitarianism’ under communism.

Key words: welfare state support, basic human values, European Social Survey, multi-group SEM

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1. Introduction

In this study, we investigate the value orientations of citizens that underlie perceptions of welfare state legitimacy and support for public welfare provision. More specifically, we assess the impact of two higher-order value types from the theory of basic human values (Schwartz 1992) - self-transcendence and conservation - on preferences for government intervention in welfare areas such as pensions, sickness benefits and unemployment benefits. It is our purpose to answer three research questions: First, what are the effects of self-transcendence and conservation values on welfare state support? Second, is the influence of values cross-culturally robust, i.e. similar across European countries? Third, what are the contextual factors that can account for any discovered between-country differences in the value effects?

The present study contributes to the current understanding of welfare state attitudes in several ways. The main contribution is that it compares the empirical relationships between value priorities and welfare state across countries. While it is already known from previous research that broad value dimensions influence citizens' responses to the welfare state (see e.g. Feldman and Steenbergen 2001; Feldman and Zaller 1992; Lewin-Epstein et al. 2003), this study evidences that the impact of values varies greatly across national contexts. Second, our comparative approach makes it possible to move beyond purely individual-level relationships, and to identify the contextual (institutional) factors that moderate the relationship between human values and welfare state attitudes. Specifically, we show how in Eastern countries¹ –i.e. countries that are characterized by a less extensive welfare state as well as a unique cultural and political experience under communism- radically different value priorities are underlying welfare support. This contextual focus allows us to contribute to the (still limited) literature on policy feedback effects, in which public opinion is not only conceived as appearing on the 'input' side of democratic processes, but also as an outcome of government arrangements and institutions (Mettler and Soss 2004; Kumlin & Stadelmann-Steffen 2014). Third, current welfare attitudes literature has largely neglected Eastern European countries, with their unique experiences of the communist era as well as their recent transition to Western-style democracy. Whereas a few studies investigate the

¹ Throughout this article, we use the term Eastern European countries to refer to the Central and Eastern European countries (CEE), and Western countries to denote Nordic, Continental, Anglo-Saxon and Southern European countries

demographic and socio-economic basis of support as well as cross-national differences in welfare attitudes in Eastern Europe (e.g., Lipsmeyer 2003; Svallfors 2010), this study uncovers the underlying structuring of welfare state attitudes in Eastern European countries in terms of value priorities.

To answer our research questions, we analyse data from the European Social Survey round 4 (ESS-4, 2008/2009). A multi-group structural equation modelling (MGSEM) approach is used to estimate the effects of basic human values on welfare state support across a wide range of European countries, thereby taking cross-national measurement equivalence into account.

2 Theoretical framework, previous research and hypotheses

2.1 The theory of basic human values

Values are personal and abstract motivational goals that refer to preferable modes of conduct or end-states of existence, and which guide people's attitudes and behaviour (Rokeach 1973; Schwartz 1992; 1994). Schwartz' (1992) well-known *theory of basic human values* identifies a structure of ten value types which can be derived from universal requirements of human existence. The postulated value types have distinct motivational emphases (see Table 1) and can be classified into a circular continuum representing their dynamic relationships (see Figure 1). Four higher-order value types along two orthogonal dimensions can be distinguished: self-transcendence (the promotion of welfare for all) versus self-enhancement (the promotion of individual interests, success and power), and openness to change (readiness for change and independence of thought, action and feelings) versus conservation (traditions, order, obedience, and resistance to change).

A distinct advantage that Schwartz' theory has over other value models is that a theoretically well founded and elaborately tested measurement instrument is available. The same set and structure of values has been identified empirically in more than 100 human societies and cultures (Schwartz 1994; Schwartz and Sagiv 1995), and the cross-national comparability of the indicators has been studied intensively (e.g. Davidov et al. 2008a). Although the value models of Inglehart (1977) and Schwartz for a large part capture the same broad value divides (Dobewall & Rudnev 2014), it has been shown that the Schwartz' value measures possess better measurement quality than Inglehart's materialism-post-materialism scale (Datler et al. 2013). Another argument for choosing the Schwartz' value theory is that its indicators are formulated in a more abstract

manner compared to the political values used in previous research (Feldman and Steenbergen 2001; Feldman and Zaller 1992; Lewin-Epstein et al. 2003). This measurement gives a better reflection of the theoretical distance between values and attitudes (such as welfare support), guarantees better discriminant validity and allows for a more stringent test of the values-attitudes nexus.

[TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

[FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

2.2 The link between basic human values and welfare state support

Basic human values are thus broad goals that serve as guiding principles in the various domains of life. As such, values should be distinguished from ideological stances and political choice. Values are broader and more fundamental than political ideology, and can instead be conceptualized as the foundation ideologies are derived from (Caprara 2006). Furthermore, value priorities underpin the process of attitude formation (Sagiv and Schwartz 1995; Davidov et al. 2008b). Conceptually, attitudes should be clearly delineated from values. Attitudes are summary evaluations concerning specific objects or situations, and that predispose individuals to react to certain objects in a favourable or unfavourable manner (Ajzen 2001). This is in contrast to values, which refer to abstract, trans-situational criteria upon which such evaluations are based. The values-attitudes link operates through the following social-psychological mechanism: values will influence the attitude towards an object to the extent that the attitudinal object has relevant consequences for the attainment of the motivational goals associated with that value (Sagiv and Schwartz 2005; Davidov et al. 2008b).

This contribution focuses on citizens' evaluations of the welfare state. Previous research has shown that support for government intervention is a crucial component of individual welfare state attitudes (van Oorschot and Meuleman 2012). Support for government intervention is often conceived as capturing two dimensions, namely preferences with regard to the range (what tasks concerning what policy areas governments should take responsibility for) and the degree (how much governments should spend on certain social policies) of government intervention (Roller 1995). Based on the general social-psychological mechanism describe above, concrete hypotheses regarding the relationships between human values and welfare state support can be derived. The point of departure is the following: If the motivational goals associated with a particular value are

promoted (or obstructed) by welfare state arrangements, that value will have a positive (or negative) impact on welfare state attitudes.

The welfare state has quite direct consequences for the motivational emphases associated with two² higher-order value dimensions,³ namely self-transcendence and conservation values. Self-transcendence comprises the value types benevolence and universalism, which share a motivational emphasis on the disregard for selfish interests in favour of the equal treatment and welfare of all individuals (Schwartz 1992). Through its function of securing a basic modicum of welfare for all citizens, the welfare state obviously provides opportunities to realize the motivational goals of self-transcendence. Therefore, we anticipate a positive relationship between these values and welfare state support.

Hypothesis 1: People who embrace self-transcendence values are expected to be more supportive of welfare state arrangements.

Conservation values emphasize the preservation of social order, compliance with established rules and customs, and obedience to authority. Alternative possible connections between these motivational emphases and the welfare state can be conceived. First, conservative critique of the welfare state stipulates that welfare arrangements change traditional forms of social order, destroy local communities and crowd out informal care relationships (Etzioni 1995). As such, the welfare state is opposed to traditional social order, and conservation values could have a negative influence on support for government intervention:

Hypothesis 2a: People who embrace conservation values are expected to be less supportive of welfare state arrangements.

However, the welfare state is at the same time a stabilizing system of social stratification (Esping-Andersen 1990), and state-governed social provision can be seen as part of the social order. According to this argument, conservation values can also be attained through welfare state arrangements, and conservation is expected to have a positive effect on welfare state support.

² The two other higher-order dimensions, self-enhancement and openness to change, are not studied in this contribution, since they are theoretically less relevant, and because including all the dimensions simultaneously causes multicollinearity problems (see the methods section for a discussion).

³ In this contribution, we analyze higher-order value dimensions, because previous studies (Davidov et al. 2008a) have shown that the measurement instrument included in the European Social Survey (the dataset we use) lacks discriminant validity to distinguish between individual value types. However, using higher-order value dimensions is also justified from a theoretical perspective. Davidov et al. (2008a) argue that partitioning the circular continuum into ten value types is arbitrary, and that greater or fewer fine-tuned divisions are also possible.

Hypothesis 2b: People who embrace conservation values are expected to be more supportive of welfare state arrangements.

Although we are not aware of previous studies on the relationship between human values and welfare support, various studies have employed ideological dimensions that are related to the self-transcendence dimension. Lewin-Epstein et al. (2003) report that endorsement of equality as a justice principle increases support for redistributive policies, while Feldman and Steenbergen (2001) find that egalitarianism aggravates support for social welfare spending. These findings are compatible with hypothesis 1.

2.3 Bringing context in: values, welfare support and institutional design

These social-psychological mechanisms linking human values to welfare support might perhaps play at a purely individual level, they obviously do not operate in a societal vacuum. Existing welfare state research evidences that individuals' belief systems are crucially intertwined with contextual factors, such as the design of welfare institutions (e.g. Arts and Gelissen 2001; Mau 2003; van Oorschot et al. 2008; Rothstein 1998; Svallfors 2007). The literature is plagued by considerable disagreement, however, on the causal direction of the relationship between public opinion and welfare design. A central argument in the (neo-)institutionalist literature, for example, is that welfare institutions affect citizens' beliefs and preferences. In this literature, institutions are considered as more than just sets of rules according to which material resources are redistributed. Institutions also express normative views on what is a just and fair social order (Svallfors 2007; Rothstein 1998). As such, institutional arrangements can be considered as parts of a 'moral economy' that have formative effects on values and reciprocity norms among citizens (Svallfors 1996; Mau 2003). Titmuss' classic study on blood donations (1971) exemplifies this argument, by illustrating how specific institutional designs – *in casu* a privatized market with monetary remuneration – can undermine altruistic motives to give blood. In similar vein, also theories on policy feedback stress that institutional arrangements have an impact on public opinion. The policy feedback mechanism implies that policies, once enacted, create incentives and interests and therefore affect subjective experiences and normative orientations (Mettler and Soss 2004; Svallfors 2007; Kumlin & Stadelmann-Steffen 2014).

Others have argued that the causal relationship runs in the other direction, namely from normative beliefs and opinions to institutional design. Esping-Andersen's (1990) seminal work on welfare regimes, for example, draws heavily on the idea that the institutional set-up of welfare states is influenced by and embedded in specific socio-political value systems (i.e. liberal, social-democratic and conservative ideologies). Similarly, the idea of policy responsiveness (Brooks & Manza 2006) implies that public opinion forms a political context that exerts a conditioning effect on institutional reform. Most probably, both mechanisms operate simultaneously. Taken together, policy feedback and policy responsiveness mechanisms can explain the phenomena of 'path dependency' (Pierson 1993) and 'virtuous or vicious circles' (Rothstein 1998: 135) that help us to understand the unique and relatively consistent historical trajectories of different institutional traditions across welfare states.

This study has neither the possibility nor the ambition to solve the question of the causality between policies and public opinion. Rather than studying how institutional set-up is related to popularity of certain values or the support for the welfare state, it is our goal to investigate how cross-national variation in the link between values and welfare support coincides with institutional differences. In other words: Does the extent to which certain values underpin welfare support vary alongside institutional welfare contexts? Although our cross-sectional study cannot substantiate this empirically, we are convinced that –for this specific question at least– policy feedback theory provides the most appropriate interpretative framework. The feedback literature explicitly mentions the possibility of cross-level interactions –i.e. institutional contexts moderating the link between individual-level characteristics (Kumlin & Stadelmann-Steffen 2014: 319-321). Also Sagiv and Schwartz (1995: 447) voice the idea that the extent to which values influence attitudes must be understood by taking into account the moderating influence of contextual factors. European welfare states differ considerably in their arrangements and respective outcomes, as well as in their historical cultural and political legacies. As such, they are bound to stress (or indirectly elicit) different motivational goals, which can have important consequences for the specific sets of values that underpin public support. The theoretical plausibility of the opposite argument –the strength of value-welfare support nexus explaining the design of welfare institutions– is far less strong. Our choice for this theoretical perspective does not imply that we deny that the fact that institutional development is to a certain extent endogenous to value systems and welfare support; what we do argue is that this endogeneity does not have far-reaching consequences for our specific research question.

In the remainder of this section, we identify contextual factors that moderate (and thus explain) differences between countries in the relationship between values and welfare state support.

First, we expect cross-national differences in the link between self-transcendence values and attitudes towards governmental responsibility. In countries where welfare state institutions are more committed to social protection (that is, in more generous and higher spending welfare states) the emphasis on the motivational goals related to self-transcendence values is stronger. This argumentation leads to hypothesis 3:

Hypothesis 3: The positive effect of self-transcendence values is expected to be stronger in countries with a generous welfare state.

To be clear: This hypothesis does not state that welfare generosity affects the level of endorsement of self-transcendence values or the level of welfare state support, but instead refers to a cross-level interaction: generosity is expected to (positively) moderate the strength of the relationship between self-transcendence and welfare state support. This hypothesis implies that Eastern European countries, which generally spend less on social provision, should display a weaker relationship between self-transcendence values and welfare state attitudes compared to Western European countries.

Second, we also expect differences between countries in the link between conservation values and attitudes towards governmental responsibility. In general, we expect a negative relationship between conservation and welfare state support (hypothesis 2a), although a positive relationship is also possible (hypothesis 2b). Due to the unique historical experiences under communism, we expect that the link between conservation and welfare state support might operate quite differently in Eastern European countries to the way it does in Western ones. In particular, we predict that past experiences of the combination of an extensive welfare state and authoritarian regime (what Offe [1991] calls ‘authoritarian egalitarianism’) will produce a stronger positive relationship between conservation values and welfare state support in Eastern Europe.

Hypothesis 4: In Eastern Europe, a stronger positive effect of conservation values on welfare support is expected.

Even though the Eastern Bloc collapsed two decades ago, and despite the fact that Eastern European countries have gone through a ‘Westernization’ process, they remain crucially influenced by their communist legacy in terms of its social and authoritarian features (Offe and Fuchs 2007: 1). Adaptation to new institutional conditions is a slow process in which cohort

replacement plays a key role (Svallfors 2010). After all, political preferences are relatively stable orientations that are acquired during the formative years of childhood and adolescence (although they can be affected and altered by “transactions with the political environment throughout adulthood” as well [Niemi and Jennings 1991: 970; see also Kumlin 2006: 92]). Accordingly, we argue that experiences of the former communist system in Eastern European countries can still have consequences for the value underpinnings of contemporary welfare state support, especially among older cohorts.

3. Data and methods

3.1 Dataset

In order to test our hypotheses empirically, we use data from the European Social Survey, Round 4 (ESS-4 2008/2009, data release 4; see <http://ess.nsd.uib.no>). Survey respondents for the ESS-4 were selected by means of strict probability samples of the resident populations aged 15 years and above.

Data from the ESS-4 is available for 29 countries. In this study, we focus exclusively on the EU countries, Norway and Switzerland (which leads to the exclusion of Croatia, Israel, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine).⁴ Three other countries (Hungary, Romania and Slovakia) were also omitted due to multicollinearity problems in the human values measurements (see below). The remaining 21 countries (with their country code and effective sample size) are: Belgium (BE – 1760), Bulgaria (BG – 2230), Switzerland (CH – 1819), Cyprus (CY – 1215), The Czech Republic (CZ – 2017), Germany (DE – 2751), Denmark (DK – 1606), Estonia (EE – 1661), Spain (ES – 2576), Finland (FI – 2193), France (FR – 2071), The United Kingdom (UK – 2350), Greece (GR – 2072), Ireland (IE – 1764), Latvia (LV – 1980), The Netherlands (NL – 1778), Norway (NO – 1548), Poland (PL – 1616), Portugal (PT – 2367), Sweden (SE – 1827) and Slovenia (SI – 1284).

3.2 Dependent variable: welfare state support

The ESS-4 data includes six items gauging citizens’ preferences regarding the role of government in a number of welfare areas (see Table 2 for the exact wording of questions). This measurement instrument thus refers to the range of government intervention rather than the degree of

⁴ Norway and Switzerland are not part of the EU, but are part of European economic space (members of the European Free Trade Organization). We focus on this set of countries for various reasons. First, welfare states of countries that do not belong to this group are quite different both in structure and in size. As a result, respondents from these countries are likely to interpret the ESS items differently, which troubles cross-country comparability of the measurements. Furthermore, the availability of contextual indicators for these countries is very limited.

government spending (Roller 1995). The areas referred to include the core domains of the welfare state (social protection for the sick, elderly and unemployed), as well as family-related policies (childcare, paid leave to take care of family) and the labour market (providing jobs for everyone). Exploratory analyses (results not given here) showed that the separate items have very similar relationships to human values, and thus support the choice of constructing a scale rather than analysing domain-specific indicators.

Previous studies have predominantly operationalized general support for government intervention by constructing additive composite indices (see for example Svallfors 1997; Blekesaune and Quadagno 2003). By contrast, a multi-group confirmatory factor analysis (MGCFA; Jöreskog 1971) approach is taken in this study. This allows us to test for metric equivalence (i.e. equality of factor loadings), which is a prerequisite for making meaningful comparisons of relationships (in this case between human values and support for government intervention) across countries (Davidov et al. 2014). Concretely, measurement quality and comparability was tested by fitting several nested MGCFA models with 21 groups (one group for every country) with the six indicators loading on one latent construct (see Table 3 for a summary of these models). In each model, three error covariances were tolerated.⁵ The first model (Model 1) is a baseline model without cross-group constraints on the factor loadings (i.e., configural equivalence). This model gives an acceptable approximation of the data (CFI = 0.985; RMSEA = 0.074 – see Table 2). Standardized factor loadings are quite strong (mostly > 0.50), indicating that the ESS items are sufficiently valid and reliable indicators of the latent construct. In Model 2, all factor loadings were set as equal across groups. These additional constraints led to a slight deterioration of the global model fit. Inspection of the modification indices showed that a limited number of equality constraints are responsible for the deterioration. In Model 3, 11 factor loadings constraints with high modification indices were left out,⁶ thereby improving model fit again (CFI = 0.977; RMSEA = 0.069). More importantly, according to the guidelines put forward by Cheung and Rensvold (2002), CFI and RMSEA for this model do not indicate a substantially worse fit compared to the configural model ($\Delta\text{CFI} = -0.008$; $\Delta\text{RMSEA} = -0.005$). This suggests that the model no longer contains sizeable cross-sample differences in factor loadings. Since

⁵ The error covariances set free are: D15 with D18; D16 with D17; and D19 with D20. These error covariances are theoretically justified. D15 and D18 both refer to unemployment. D19 and D20 deal with family-related policies. D16 and D17 mention government support for target groups that are widely regarded as highly deserving, namely the elderly and the sick (van Oorschot 2006).

⁶ The following factor loadings had to be set free: D16 for BG; D17 for BG, CH, CY, DE and LV; D18 for BE, FR and LV; and D19 for DE and PT.

factor loadings are at least equal for two items, partial metric equivalence is found, which means that valid comparisons of effect parameters are possible (Byrne et al. 1989).

[TABLES 2 AND 3 ABOUT HERE]

3.3 Basic human values

The ESS-4 includes 21 items to measure the ten human value types postulated by Schwartz (1992). This battery of questions is based on the original 40-item Portrait Value Questionnaire (PVQ: see for example Schwartz et al. 2001). The items describe a gender-matched fictitious person and the respondent is asked to decide on a scale from 1 (very much like me) to 6 (not like me at all) to what extent this person is, or is not, like him or her. Two questions are included to measure each value, except for universalism, which is measured using three items due to its broad content.

The measurement characteristics of the ESS version of the human values scale have been dealt with extensively in previous studies (Davidov et al. 2008a; Knoppen and Saris 2009). These studies show that due to the relatively small number of items per value type and the rather broad content of the items, the ESS instrument lacks the discriminant validity to make a clear-cut distinction between the ten value types. Instead, all indicators tend to load on the higher-order dimensions, and multicollinearity problems arise (see also Davidov et al. 2008b). Therefore, we decided to include the higher-order dimensions of conservation and self-transcendence in the analysis. This decision is also justified for theoretical reasons. Davidov et al. (2008a) argue that the division into ten distinct value types is an arbitrary convenience, and that broader or more finely-tuned value types could equally be constructed.⁷

In a similar way as for the ‘support for government intervention’ scale, we tested measurement quality and comparability by means of MGCFA (see Table 3). The MGCFA models contain two latent constructs (namely, the higher-order dimensions conservation and self-transcendence) that are measured by means of ten indicators (five items per construct). The question wordings for the value items used in this study can be found in Table 2. One of the original indicators of

⁷ Yet, even when using higher-order dimensions instead of individual value types, multicollinearity problems arise. Three Eastern European countries (Hungary, Slovakia and Romania) had to be dropped because of a very strong correlation (> 0.80) between the value dimensions of conservation and self-transcendence. Also for the other Eastern European countries, correlations between self-transcendence and conservation are remarkably stronger than for the rest of Europe. A possible explanation could be found in these countries’ “political majority culture of ‘authoritarian egalitarianism’” (Offe 1991).

conservation explicitly referring to a strong government (*“It is important to him that the government ensures his safety against all threats. He wants the state to be strong so it can defend its citizens”*.) was taken out, because it is conceptually too close to the dependent variable used in this study. A configurally equivalent model (Model 1, without equality constraints on the loadings) shows a reasonable fit (CFI = 0.925; RMSEA = 0.065). Adding between-country constraints on the factor loadings (Model 2) deteriorates the fit. However, we identified a limited number of constrained factor loadings responsible for the additional misfit.⁸ Removing these untenable constraints leads to a well-fitting model implying partial metric equivalence, thus making the comparison of effect parameters possible.

3.4 Contextual indicators

According to our argument, the impact of self-transcendence values on welfare state support will be contingent on the generosity of the welfare state. One possible indicator of welfare state generosity is social expenditure. However, the accuracy of this indicator has been criticized, as it may not adequately represent a country’s commitment to social protection and the degree of benefit generosity. The generosity of benefit provision entails several aspects - such as coverage rates, benefit levels and duration periods - that amount to a general indication of welfare state generosity. These figures would constitute a more adequate measurement of a country’s commitment to social protection (Scruggs 2006), but are only available for a limited number of countries (mainly in the OECD area). This makes it necessary to use the social spending figures in order to analyse all 21 countries. Concretely, we make use of the figures for total social expenditure expressed as a percentage of GDP.⁹

4. Results

In the analysis, we test the general hypotheses concerning the relationship between each higher-order value type and attitudes towards government intervention (hypotheses 1 and 2; see section 4.1) as well as the ones concerning the moderating role of contextual factors (hypotheses 3 and 4; see section 4.2). With regard to our general hypotheses, we expect a positive effect from self-transcendence and have mixed expectations regarding the impact of conservation values. Moreover, we expect stronger effects from self-transcendence values in the larger and higher-spending Western European welfare states. With regard to the effects from conservation

⁸ The factor loadings set free are: G9 on Conservation in BG; G18 on Self-transcendence and G20 on Conservation in DK; and G7, G9 and G16 on Conservation in PT.

⁹ This figure was retrieved from the Eurostat statistics database (<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/>).

values, we expect positive effects on welfare state attitudes in the former authoritarian Eastern European states, especially among older cohorts with greater experience of the former communist regimes. Finally, section 4.3 presents additional analyses that go deeper in the question what is the driving factor between the East-West divide.

4.1 Effects of self-transcendence and conservation values on welfare state support

As a first step, we estimate a multi-group structural equation model (MGSEM), in which support for government intervention is explained by means of the two higher-order value dimensions.¹⁰ The model contains 21 groups (one for each country) and takes into account the deviations from full metric invariance discussed in section 3. Fit indices for this model indicate that it gives an appropriate description of the data. In Table 4, the estimated effects of self-transcendence and conservation values are presented as unstandardized coefficients.¹¹ The results for self-transcendence values are quite consistent: The anticipated positive effect is found for 16 out of the 21 countries, while a negative effect is found for only one country. Thus, in the majority of countries, people who embrace self-transcendence values are more likely to support government intervention. For 10 countries, the self-transcendence effect is quite strong (standardized parameter > 0.25), suggesting that self-transcendence is, in certain contexts at least, an important predictor of welfare state support.

[TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE]

As expected, results for the higher-order value type, conservation, are more mixed. The effect is significant for only 12 countries, with a positive effect for 8 countries and a negative one for 4 countries. Thus, for most countries where the estimates are significant, the effects of conservation values are positive. In these countries, people who embrace conservation values are more supportive of government intervention. As such, the findings largely contradict the conservative critique hypothesis (hypothesis 2a), and render (yet limited) support for hypothesis 2b.

¹⁰ Because we are interested in the overall strength of the value-attitudes link rather than net effects, the models presented here do not include control variables. In an additional model, we tested the robustness of our results by introducing several individual-level control variables: age, gender, number of years full-time education completed, and social class (based on the EGP scheme). We decided not to control for ideological variables, since value theory stipulates that basic human values are causally antecedent to ideology (Caprara et al. 2006). Although in some instances the effects change substantially, adding controls does not change the general pattern and interpretations of the results. A detailed account of this additional model with controls can be found in the online Appendix.

¹¹ Unstandardized effects are more suitable for between-country comparison than standardized ones, since the latter coefficients also require equality of factor variances (which was not tested here).

We identify considerable differences between countries, not only with regard to significance, but also in the size of effects. At first sight, the strongest effects for self-transcendence seem to be found in Western European countries, while the Eastern European countries show non-existent or even negative (Poland) effects. Slovenia is a notable exception to this pattern, as a strong positive effect is found here.¹² Conservation values have positive effects on welfare state support predominantly in Eastern European countries, but also in Germany and to a lesser extent in Spain. There are various possible explanations for the quite strong positive effect in Germany. The German welfare state is known for its conservative design in terms of preserving social order, and thus might therefore be more strongly backed by conservation values. Yet, the strongly positive effect might also be the result of the communist history of East Germany, which merits separate analyses for East and West Germany in this regard (see section 4.3). Negative effects of the conservation value are found in Portugal, Denmark, Switzerland and Finland.

4.2 The moderating effect of context

The considerable cross-national differences in value effects elicit the question of whether these differences can be explained by contextual factors. In this section, we perform a more thorough test of the moderating effect of contextual factors, notably social expenditure and a communist past (hypotheses 3 and 4).

Figure 2 analyses the relationship between the effects of self-transcendence values (y-axis) and social spending as a percentage of GDP (x-axis). The effects of self-transcendence values seem to increase with social spending. Despite the small number of observations (21 countries), the correlation coefficient is statistically significant (corr. = 0.58; $p = 0.0056$).¹³ This finding is in line with the theoretical mechanisms detailed above. In countries implementing a generous social policy, the welfare state offers stronger opportunities to realize the motivational goals associated with self-transcendence values. Consequently, the impact of these values on welfare state support is greater.

¹² A possible explanation of the exceptional position of Slovenia might stem from the fact that the Slovenian experience is rather different to that of the Eastern Bloc. For instance, the Tito-Stalin split in 1948 was followed by comparatively extensive individual and economic freedoms. In the 1960s, after economic reforms and decentralization in Yugoslavia, Slovenia was already approaching a market economy. Later, Slovenia was the first post-communist transition country meeting the Maastricht criteria and joining the European Monetary Union.

¹³ We also calculated the partial correlation between the effect of self-transcendence and social expenditure, controlling for GDP per capita. This partial correlation equals 0.40 (p -value = 0.0841), and thus remains substantively relevant as well as statistically significant at the .10 level.

However, some qualification is needed. If we examine the relationship between social spending and the effect of values within the Eastern and Western clusters separately, no positive relationship is found. The size of the effect of self-transcendence values seems to run along the East-West divide, rather than being driven by social spending. Potentially, the absence of a clear relationship within the Eastern and Western clusters can be explained by social spending as a percentage of GDP being an imperfect indicator of welfare generosity. A more substantive explanation could be that the differences in the self-transcendence effect result from divergent historical experiences, and that the comparably weak effects are due to the communist legacy. Indeed, if the communist history is the main driver of these results, and the Eastern European public under communism perceived the state as failing in promoting self-transcendence values, this pattern is what one would expect.

[FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE]

Turning to the impact of conservation values on welfare state attitudes, the contextual factor that we believe moderates this relationship is a qualitative one: we expect experiences from living under the ‘egalitarian authoritarianism’ (Offe 1991) of communist regimes to result in a more positive impact from conservation values. The observed effect sizes confirm this pattern. For the Eastern European countries, the average effect size equals 0.66, while the average effect size for Western countries (including Continental, Nordic and Southern countries) is 0.03. This difference is statistically strongly significant (t -value = 4.41; p -value = 0.0003), in spite of the small number of observations. Figure 3 gives a graphical representation of the findings, and shows that greater and positive effects from conservation are consistently found in the Eastern European countries. However, three countries do not follow the observed pattern. In Slovenia, a near-zero effect is found, while Germany and Cyprus show positive effects that are similar to the ones found in Eastern Europe.

[FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE]

4.3 Two additional tests for the influence of communist history

It is our interpretation that the differences in the effects of conservation between Eastern and Western European countries are due to the communist legacy of authoritarian egalitarianism. However, the East-West divide is a catch-all variable that also captures a great many institutional and economic differences. To strengthen our interpretation, we carry out two additional

empirical tests. Our first additional test uses the specific case of Germany (which has already attracted attention due to an exceptionally strong positive conservation effect) to disentangle institutional, economic and historical factors. East (DEE) and West Germany (DEW) have followed clearly different historical paths, with East Germany belonging to the Communist Bloc until the unification of 1990. However, since then East and West Germany have for the most part shared their institutional setup and economic situation as part of one federal state (notwithstanding regional differences). If the legacy of communism is a crucial factor determining the impact of conservation values, the effect in East Germany should follow the pattern of Eastern European countries, notwithstanding two decades of German unification. The results (shown in Figure 3) confirm this hypothesis. If we estimate the effects for East and West Germany separately (using a MGSEM with 22 groups for 20 countries and the ‘two Germanys’), a clear divergence between East and West Germany is found. Conservation values have a strong positive effect on attitudes towards governmental responsibility in East Germany (0.69), which is completely in accordance with the post-communist pattern. The conservation effect in West Germany (0.18) is in line with the pattern in Western Europe. These findings render clear support for our assumption that a common denominator in Eastern Europe, namely experiences from communism, result in fundamental differences with regard to the influence of conservation values.

Our second test concerns cohort differences. If a communist legacy is the explanation for the strongly positive conservation effects in Eastern Europe, we expect to see strong cohort differences in these countries. Hence, the positive impact of conservation values should be more apparent among older cohorts who experienced the former system. Younger people in Eastern European countries, especially those socialized after the collapse of the Eastern Bloc, should show patterns more similar to Western Europeans in this regard. Concurrently, we do not expect such cohort differences in Western Europe. To test these expectations, we estimated the effect of conservation values on welfare support for four age cohorts (15 to 32 years, 33 to 43 years, 44 to 63 years, and 64 years and above) in Eastern and Western European countries separately. Figure 4 displays this conservation effect (Y-axis) for each age cohort within the two regions (East vs. West).

[FIGURE 4 ABOUT HERE]

In Western European countries, cohort differences in the effects of conservation values are quite small and statistically insignificant (the 95% confidence intervals overlap). For the four cohorts, the effect of conservation is relatively close to zero. By contrast, in Eastern European countries cohort differences in the values-attitudes link are considerably larger. The effect of conservation values is by far the strongest (1.35) in the oldest cohort of respondents, aged 64 or above. The effects for the two cohorts aged between 15 and 32, 33 and 43, and between 44 and 63, are significantly weaker (0.48, 0.65 and 0.60 respectively) and are very similar to the conservation effects found in Western Europe. In fact, for the cohorts aged between 33 and 43, and between 44 and 63, no significant East-West difference can be found regarding the impact of conservation values. Given our socialization argument, it is surprising that no clear-cut East-West differences are found for those aged between 44 and 63, who were roughly between 25 and 44 years old (and thus past their formative years) during the collapse of the Communist Bloc. Nevertheless, the remarkable position of the oldest cohort in the East suggests that the unique experiences from being socialized in the former communist states have important consequences for the extent to which people perceive their values to be attained through welfare state arrangements.

5. Conclusions and discussion

In this study, we have shown that attitudes to the welfare state in Europe are strongly embedded in citizens' value orientations. Self-transcendence values significantly influence welfare state support in the majority of the European countries under study, in the sense that people who embrace self-transcendence values in these countries display stronger support. Findings for conservation values are more mixed, with some countries showing a positive influence, while in others, negative or near-zero effects are found.

However, which specific value dimensions drive public welfare state support turns out to vary crucially across national contexts. In line with our theoretical expectations, the strongest positive effects of self-transcendence are found in welfare states with high levels of social expenditure. In the less generous welfare states of Eastern Europe, the positive impact of self-transcendence is considerably weaker or even non-existent. However, close inspections of the scatter plot raise doubts about whether the link between self-transcendence and welfare state support is truly moderated by social expenditure. After all, the relationship between social spending and the effect of self-transcendence values does not appear separately within the clusters of Western and Eastern European countries. This is possibly a result of the inadequacy of our indicator. In light

of this, our results with regard to the influence of spending should be interpreted with a fair degree of caution. Future research should, especially in the presence of new data, devote efforts to investigate this further.

In Eastern European countries, conservation rather than self-transcendence values seem to be the central values that people draw on when forming their opinions concerning welfare state arrangements. We argue that this particular pattern in Eastern Europe might be due to the unique historical experience of authoritarian egalitarianism under communism. Two additional analyses support this interpretation. First, the conservation effect in West Germany is very similar to the Western European countries, while East Germany displays a pattern that is characteristic of Eastern European countries. Two decades of shared institutional settings in East Germany have apparently not erased the persistent social and political culture of the past. Second, clear cohort differences in the effect of conservation are found in Eastern Europe: positive effects of conservation values are considerably stronger among the older cohorts. By contrast, in Western Europe no substantial cohort effects are present. It appears as though older people in Eastern Europe are responding to a system that is a thing of the past, and that these responses will probably disappear gradually as younger cohorts replace the older ones.

These findings corroborate the argument put forth by Svallfors (2010), namely that expectations regarding the role of government change slowly, for instance in terms of what motivational goals (i.e., values) the public demands that governments pursue. When it comes to the formation of attitudes and their underlying structuring, it seems as though historical experiences can be as influential as present-day circumstances. From a policy feedback perspective, it is particularly interesting that expectations and preferences seem to linger and have great consequences for attitudes towards an entirely new institutional reality. This also brings to the fore new questions about the future orientation and calibration of welfare state institutions in Eastern European countries. We have shown that while previous research provides evidence that attitudes in Eastern and Western Europe are converging, there are still fundamental differences in the structuring of these attitudes in terms of their underlying values. To assess whether this has important consequences for the prospects of welfare state development in Eastern Europe is a question beyond the scope of this study, but an important task for future research.

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Table 1. Basic human values and motivational emphasis.

Value	Motivational emphasis
POWER	Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources.
ACHIEVEMENT	Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards.
HEDONISM	Pleasure and sensuous gratification for oneself.
STIMULATION	Excitement, novelty and challenge in life.
SELF-DIRECTION	Independent thought and action-choosing, creating, and exploring.
UNIVERSALISM	Understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature.
BENEVOLENCE	Preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact.
TRADITION	Respect, commitment and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provide the self.
CONFORMITY	Restraint of actions, inclinations and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms.
SECURITY	Safety, harmony and stability of society, relationships and self.

From Schwartz et al. (2001).

Table 2. Question wording for the ESS items.

Concept	Item #	Question wording	Answer scale
		For each of the tasks I read out, please tell me on a score of 0-10 how much responsibility you think governments should have...	
Welfare state support	D15	...ensure a job for everyone who wants one?	0 (should not be the government's responsibility at all) - 10 (should be entirely the government's responsibility)
	D16	...ensure adequate health care for the sick?	
	D17	...ensure a reasonable standard of living for the old?	
	D18	...ensure a reasonable standard of living for the unemployed?	
	D19	...ensure sufficient childcare services for working parents?	
	D20	...provide paid leave from work for people who temporarily have to care for sick family members?	
Self-transcendence (ST)	G3	He thinks it is important that every person in the world be treated equally. He believes everyone should have equal opportunities in life.	1 (not like me at all) - 6 (very much like me)
	G8	It is important to him to listen to people who are different from him. Even when he disagrees with them, he still wants to understand them.	
	G12	It is very important to him to help the people around him. He wants to care for their well-being.	
	G18	It is important to him to be loyal to his friends. He wants to devote himself to people close to him.	
	G19	He strongly believes that people should care for nature. Looking after the environment is important to him.	
Conservation (CO)	G5	It is important to him to live in secure surroundings. He avoids anything that might endanger his safety.	
	G7	He believes that people should do what they're told. He thinks people should follow rules at all times, even when no one is watching.	
	G9	It is important to him to be humble and modest. He tries not to draw attention to himself.	
	G16	It is important to him always to behave properly. He wants to avoid doing anything people would say is wrong.	
	G20	Tradition is important to him. He tries to follow the customs handed down by his religion or his family.	

Table 3. Results for the MGCFA measurement equivalence tests.

	Chi ²	Df	RMSEA	CFI	Δ RMSEA	Δ CFI
<i>Welfare state support</i>						
M1: Baseline - configural equivalence	1456.5	126	0.074	0.985	- -	- -
M2: Metric equivalence	2694.2	226	0.075	0.972	0.001	-0.013
M3: Partial metric equivalence	2177.2	215	0.069	0.977	-0.005	-0.008
<i>Basic Human Values</i>						
M1: Baseline - configural equivalence	6467.8	714	0.065	0.925	- -	- -
M2: Metric equivalence	7579.0	874	0.064	0.912	-0.001	-0.013
M3: Partial metric equivalence	7169.4	868	0.062	0.917	-0.003	-0.008

Table 4. Estimated effects (standardized parameters in parentheses) of higher-order value dimensions on welfare state support.

Conservation				Self-transcendence		
	Par.Est	(Std.Par.)			Par.Est	(Std.Par.)
PL	1.200	(0.44)		SI	1.345	(0.45)
CZ	0.862	(0.31)		GR	1.039	(0.38)
EE	0.706	(0.27)		DK	0.924	(0.40)
BG	0.660	(0.25)		PT	0.884	(0.39)
LV	0.617	(0.24)		NO	0.854	(0.36)
CY	0.596	(0.21)		FI	0.845	(0.37)
DE	0.464	(0.20)		ES	0.832	(0.30)
ES	0.243	(0.10)		IE	0.784	(0.29)
BE	0.057	(0.02)		FR	0.708	(0.28)
UK	0.045	(0.03)		SE	0.692	(0.27)
NL	0.027	(0.02)		BE	0.641	(0.24)
SE	0.023	(0.01)		UK	0.608	(0.24)
FR	0.002	(0.00)		CY	0.541	(0.18)
GR	-0.001	(0.00)		NL	0.491	(0.24)
NO	-0.011	(-0.01)		CH	0.422	(0.11)
SI	-0.063	(-0.03)		DE	0.260	(0.08)
FI	-0.136	(-0.08)		BG	0.030	(0.01)
IE	-0.162	(-0.08)		CZ	-0.056	(-0.02)
CH	-0.210	(-0.09)		LV	-0.162	(-0.06)
DK	-0.221	(-0.14)		EE	-0.303	(-0.10)
PT	-0.265	(-0.12)		PL	-0.787	(-0.26)
Fit indices of the MGCFA model: $\chi^2 = 13409.9$ Df = 2300 CFI = 0.934 RMSEA = 0.050						

Note: Statistically significant parameters ($\alpha = 0.05$) are printed in bold

Figure 1. Circular continuum representing basic human values and higher-order value types.

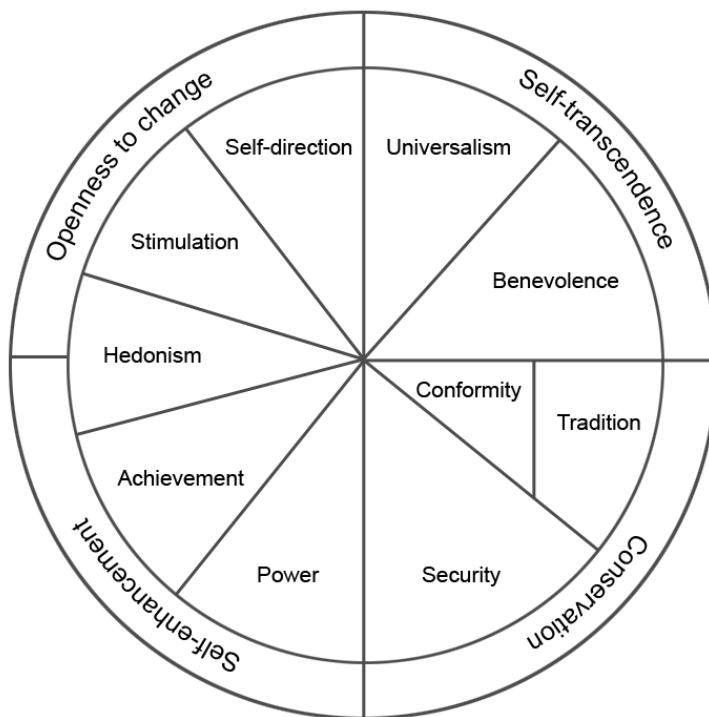


Figure 2. Effects sizes for self-transcendence values on welfare state support and total social expenditure.

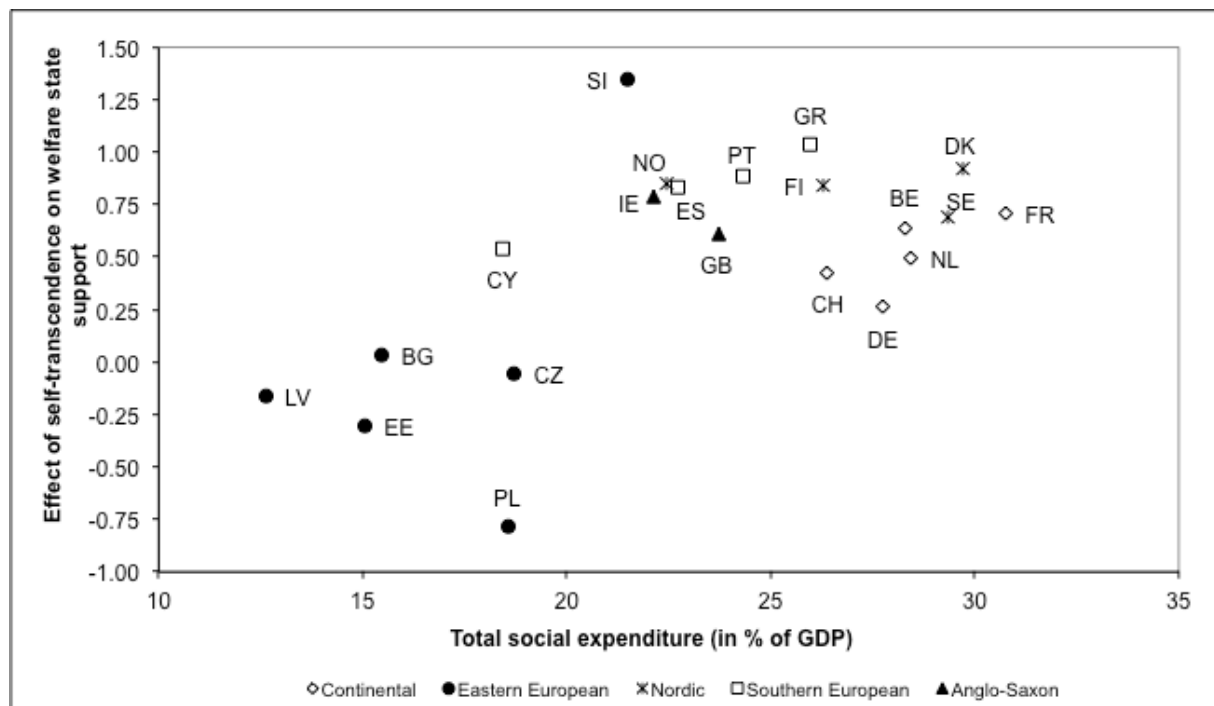


Figure 3. Unstandardized effects of conservation values on welfare state support (y-axis) – Western and Eastern European countries compared

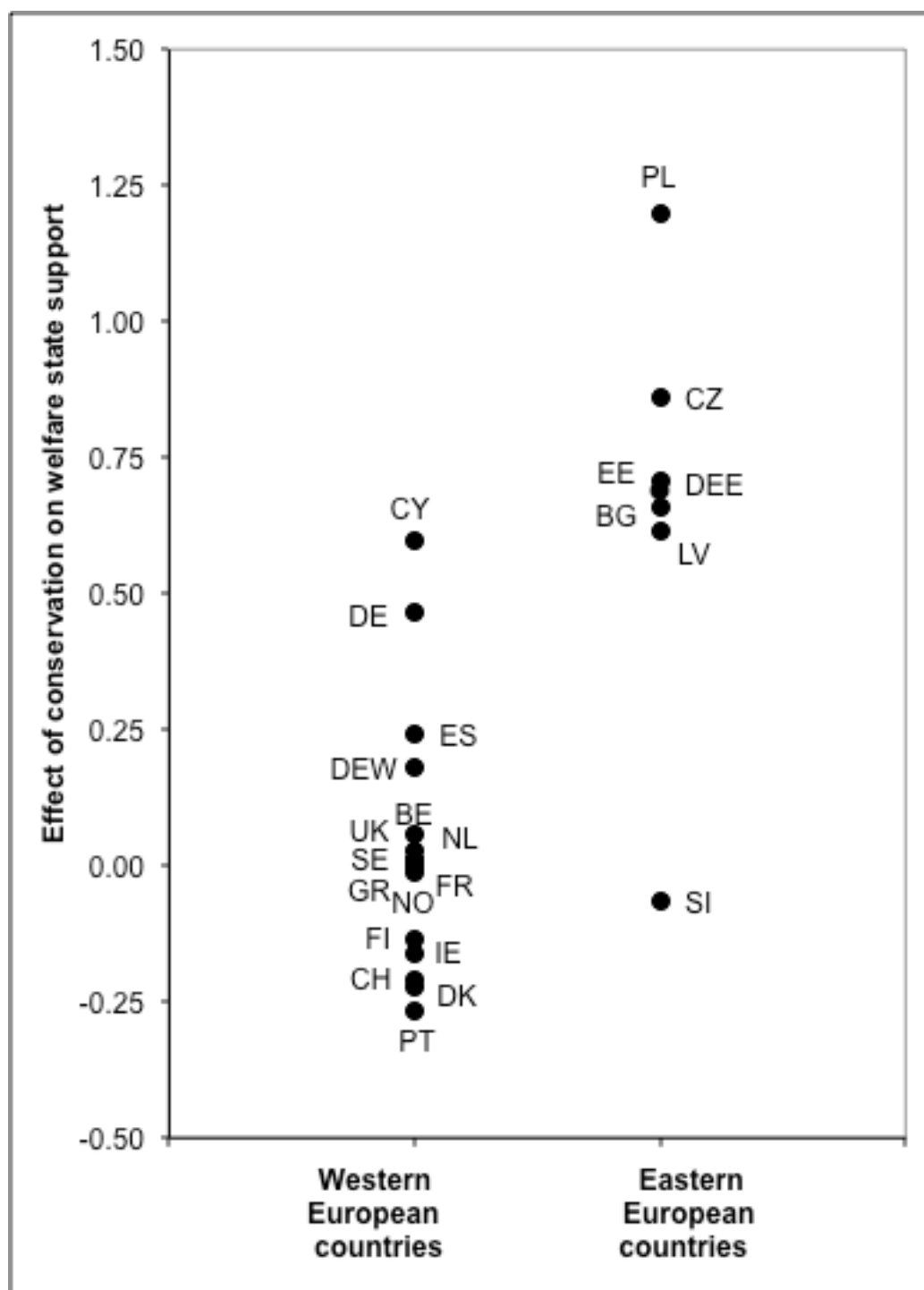


Figure 4. Unstandardized effects of conservation values on welfare state support across cohorts in Western and Eastern European countries (with 95% confidence intervals).

